

Health Issues and Priorities

Preliminary Problems List

After reviewing the primary data sets, the county health council listed those issues they considered the major problems in the county. This list was achieved by group consensus. Below in alphabetical order is the list of ten problems selected by the council for review.

- ❑ Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs
- ❑ Crime & Violence
- ❑ Environmental Issues
- ❑ Expense of Health Care (Senior Citizen's Prescriptions, Dental Care)
- ❑ Family Dysfunction (Child abuse, children entering State Custody, School Nurse Referrals, Juvenile Court referral rate)
- ❑ Gangs (Criminal)
- ❑ Heart Conditions, Cancer, Diabetes, Kidney Disease
- ❑ Lack of Knowledge of Basic Health Care & Disease Treatment and Prevention
- ❑ Maxed-Out Hospitalization Policies
- ❑ Teen Pregnancy

Priority Problems List

The Montgomery County Health Council reviewed a considerable amount of data related to the health status of its residents during 1997 and 1998. A summary of data pertaining to each of the preliminary problem areas was assembled to determine the degree of each problem. Three subgroups were formed to collect and review data associated with the problem areas identified by the council. After reviewing the data, each subgroup brought three problems areas and the substantiating data to the council for prioritization as the major health problems in the county. A total of nine problems were identified and ranked by the council.

To establish the priorities among the identified health problems, the council used a modified version of the J.J. Hanlon method. The nine problem areas were ranked 1 through 9 in two categories: size and seriousness (the number of people affected, the impact on health, and the financial cost). The rank assigned in each category was based on each member's perception of the problem from personal awareness and the available data. The rankings for each category were combined to provide a total score for each problem. The problem area with the lowest total score became the individual's #1 ranked problem, and the problems area with the highest total score became the individual's #7 ranked problem. All member score sheets were combined in the same manner to obtain the council's priority problem rankings. The priority problems, their rank and score, and the supporting data utilized to validate each problem area are provided below.